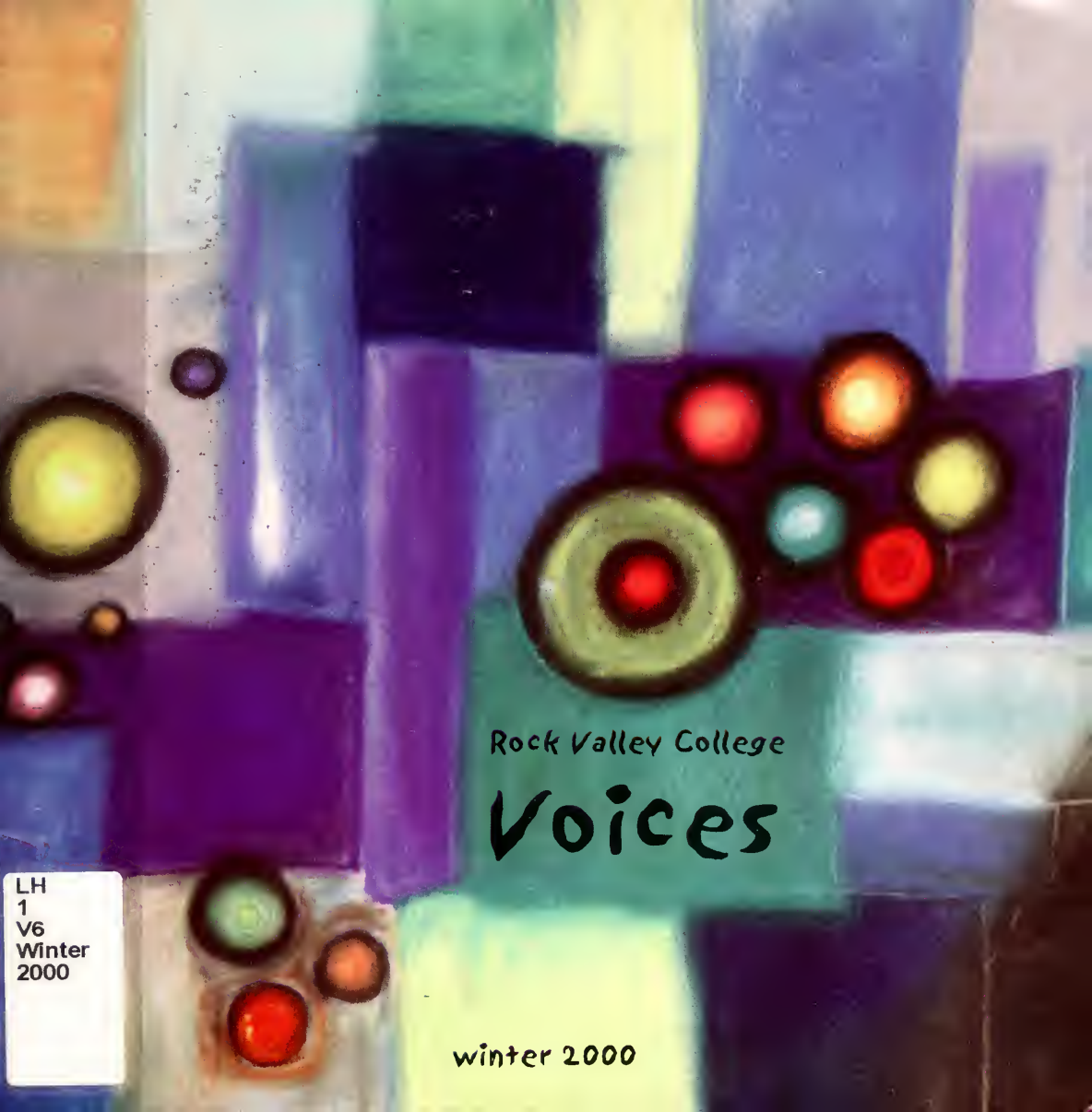

LH
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Winter
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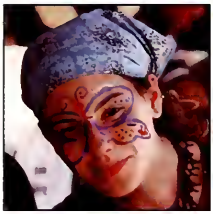
Jessica Moore

EDITORIAL STAFF



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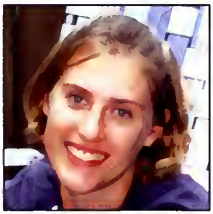
Ryan Saunders

Mario Caputo

Betzi Moore



Dana Drozd-Gardner

Jeffrey Michels

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The Mollusk Sequence
by Mario Caputo

mollusca
Oh Mollusca, you're a mouthful,
with mesoderm and coelom.
Precambrian descendent:
your sericin's cemented
by mesenteries 'tween your slickness,
you've radulae for tongue,
feet of pallid pulpy stuff
and ciliated young.

1
Univalvia

apple snails
Homes are uni-plaster,
with apex here, and whorl.
Your sinistral shells are whorthy too
if dug from muck and marl.
(And here's what I would do:
dig left-handed
just to catch
lucky lefty valve of voodoo.)

to eat a pulmonate
Tender little Gastropods
with homes calcareous, blue.
They eat you, raw, on the Rhine
but here's what I would do:
Pulmonata jambalaya,
delicious Creole foodthing,
you're simmering inside my mind;
my tastebuds sour-sting
(just from taste-*thinking*).

nudibranchia
And now we'll see the naked snails
(the sexy nudibranchs don't hide)
that live in salt on stalked sargassum
and quiver with the tide.

Purple-striped aquamarine,
you dance but purr "don't touch."
You slink and sway like swimming strings
and coo: "I'm just for seein'"
('cause you're aquamarine.)

You, papillate pomegranate,
are slick, slow and sericeous.
You're painted with a mucous coat.
(We fish find you delicious.)

But you've a secret, vermi-slug,
(nematocysts that sting).
You'd never be a chub's love bug:
you'd sting, then pawn his ring.

2
Bivalvia

Perfect pearly prism layer
is your inner room.
Sleeping in a tomb,
your clammy, slimy womb
is hinged to let your foot retire
when barracuda zoom.

the black shells
To the patron
eating fritters
fried of critters
pull from blue,
You
are just a mussel
juicy, black,
green-intestined,
shelled-on-back.
But to the probing diver
or the filcher's can,
you close up tight and black.
(So human.)

tambourine
And scallops, you're misunderstood:
let's not forget that
at the market you're flaccid dorsal cut
from ashen shark.

But underhere in wan blue light
you clap and sprite,
zoom and light,
churn and bite!
Scallops: Gaia's tambourine teeth.
Clip clap tick your rims.
Chlamys opercularis is your funky Latin name.
(Translates into "I can scat sing
swimming in your seine.")

Agate

Yourpulse
  echoes
    mypulse,
births2breaths one.
Eyes blink brown,
  brown as beads
on wet, oiled boots
in the slow crush of surf.
My heads chatter:
-abrasive-
lost, forgotten, caressed
as smoothgreen agate tumbles
-topples-
across a beach of agate.

Some dappled cobbles perk
in blue-waisted cairns. Brown
and
peagreen gravel plinks, and pricks
the silver curls of waves,
sliding away and down
and down.
Stonecherries sigh
in liquid crush as sea
falls to beach, caught
in agate undertow.

Rising

Thismatter
suffuses
thatmatter in
treerings, echolocation,
and round rich breads
broken between 2
or 2 pr.

Monitor

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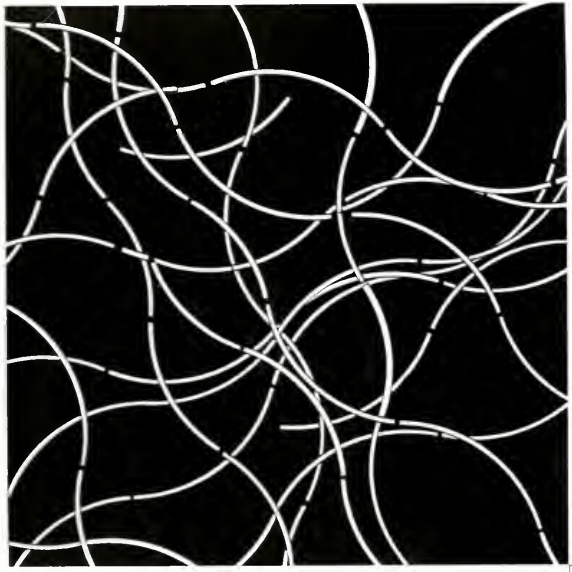
Soup

Scar, puckered pink, worms across her hip
slips toward her solar plexus.
My eye's finger gropes along it, a coarse suture
interrupting her clean, white belly.
I trace the wound on my
flesh
 and flinch.

Her hazel eyes are not so shy: she finds my gaze and laughs.
She always laughs with her eyes burning and brown.
She laughs about Colin and the fading chartreuse bruise--
        a mango on her triceps.
She laughs about the worm scar
        a parasite on her pure belly.

Last Thursday she came in laughing with hair dyed red as soup.
        And her smile was warm as soup
        and her words were thick as soup.
I smiled and told her she was sanguine
        but she knows I've seen her bleed.

Katie Klaas



Ximena Giraldo

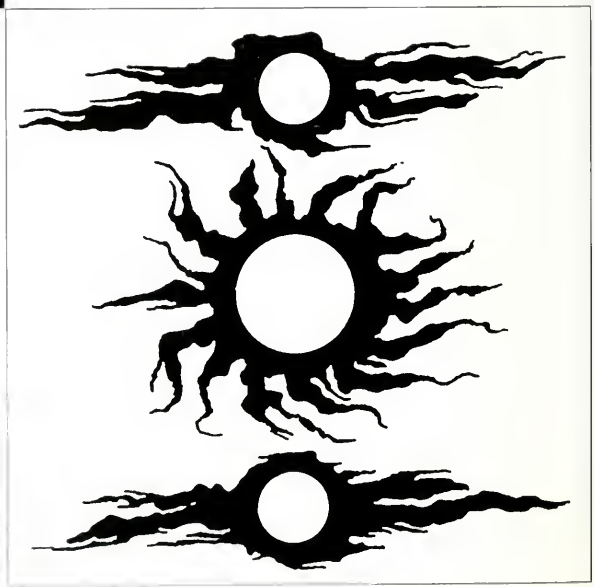
Like all bodies of water
drift helplessly about
the earth's surface,
humans do the same.
Everything is an illusion.
Reality is Cream Based
and can be readily
applied to your face.

— **Mark Dal Pra**

SENTENTIOUS

Thoughts stall
To rearrange
Feelings with fingers
Linger
On the Braille of passion

— **Lori Agostini**



Paul Van Altena

Taper

I touch.
You come to light
slowly, white
in the cool, shy
as the first star.
Dark steps back
slowly,
cupping its hands
around your small bright head.
Your silky shawl
brims, slips
from slim shoulders,
pools white at your feet.
You burn, you
with no choice in the matter,
yet your face,
on its wisp of neck,
shivers like water
in the lightest wind,
alive, alive!

The Poet Grows Testy

Had it with Fraughts and Essences,
moons, and how trees
toward dusk in mid-November float
in the plum smoke of their breath.

Give me mud. Elbows. Even
organ meats. Tarmac & umbrellas.
Icicles! Camels! Tagiatelle
schmoozing in green oil.

I sing the body bored,
the scratch & sniff of match, match, match
on arid Sundays, and how
rubberbands die the silentest of deaths.

The kids want Tic-Tacs.
Mom wants her soaps. Cashier wants
something to sit on.
I'll write the stool.

Watch

Your fat strap fit
for manly wrist,
your curving face
as fragile and unscathed
as any sky,
each night I nestle you
in soft tossed stuff
on the wide lap of walnut rocker
redeemed our first young year.
Each morning
there you are,
your leather cooled, your glass
the face of water on a bright, still day.

Today, gone utterly,
flown somehow in the night,
you lurched
or leaped or launched yourself
or, in some rainbow shimmy,
morphed.
Behind or under or inside,
atop, beneath, between,
you mark me scrabbling,
ticking like a bomb.
somewhere secret, little wanton,
tilt your face.
See morning come.

Three Poems by Judith Cordary

Ximena Giraldo

Carole Rittenhouse

Meiosis

And so it began, not with a bang
but a sigh and a groan from the
heaviness of love. Unprepared and

frightened we were by our creation
for intermittent cries in the night hung
sluggish in the morning,

and dull eyes filled with the rays on
the bed. For months, day and night
had no pattern except for the constant

growth of love. Until, finally,
comfort overtook confusion.
Maturity blossomed with the first

fever and swelled with excited cries.
Yes, she's ours.
Yes, she's mine.

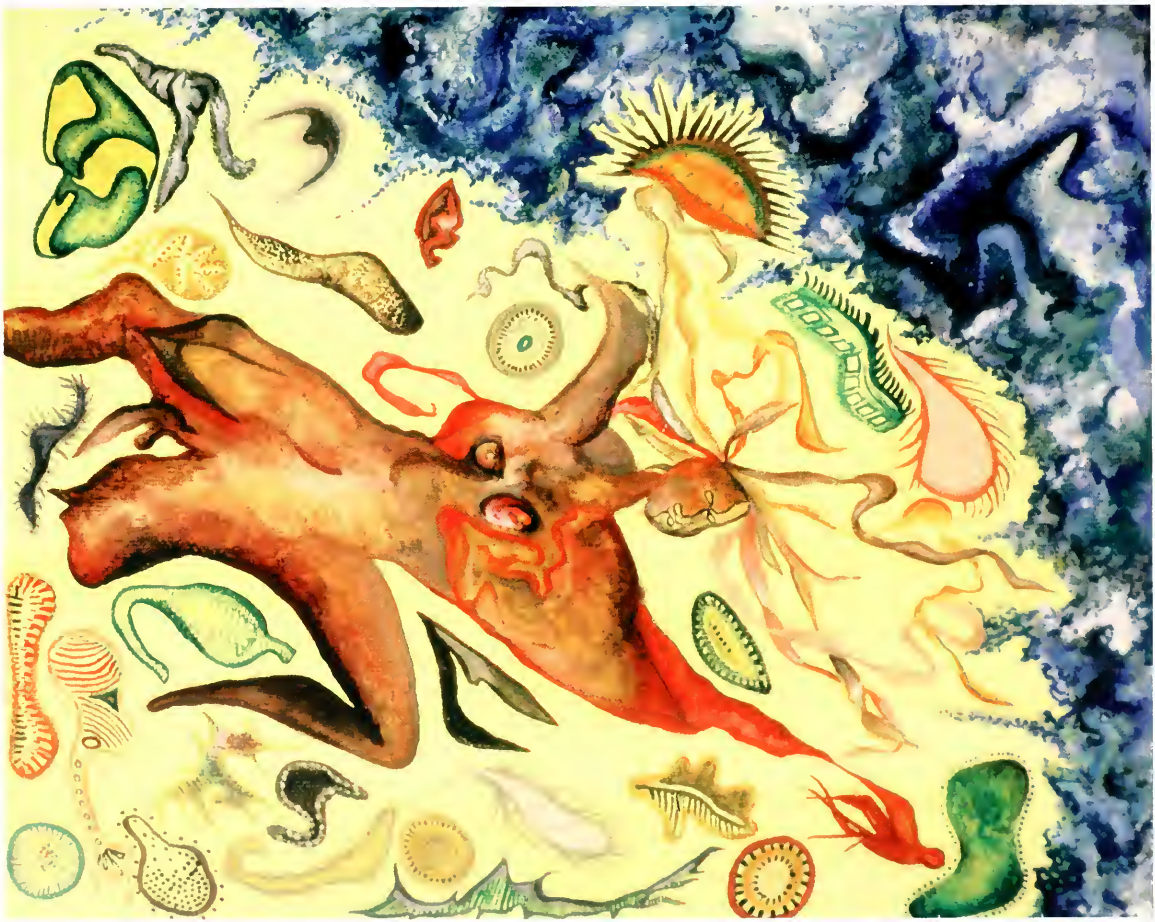
Dazed with pride we no longer felt
the heaviness—numb to the first fear
of ownership we watched our creation

grow, belying the years with its speed, a
shiny foil to our stagnant selves.
Nostalgia infused the hours of being a

spectator to a miracle with dim reminders
that one day we will not be enough;
our love will snap like a taut rubber

band and leave us dangling apart.

— **Melissa Alexander**



Betzi Moore

Jen Hartzog

A Particular Saturday in the Life of Mr. C. Donnie Dooliedopper

by Nathan P. McDonald

An alarm sounding like a parrot goes off in Mr. C. Donnie Dooliedopper's bedroom at 5 a.m. on Saturday morning. Mr. Dooliedopper immediately perks up from his bed with a smile under his dark, bushy moustache. He rubs the top of his bald head and waves at all the colorful antiques from all over the world that decorate his room. After he makes his bed, he runs barefoot downstairs in his rainbow-colored pajamas to wake up his dog, Smudge, who sleeps under Mr. Dooliedopper's living room couch. He then leans down beside the elephant-shaped couch and says, "Smudgy-boy! The sun is waiting for us!" Smudge wakes up and barks three times. They both run into the balloon-filled kitchen, and Mr. Dooliedopper grabs food from his refrigerator that's been spotted with painted dog paws. Then Smudge and Mr. Dooliedopper make their way through the balloons to the back porch.

Mr. Dooliedopper loves watching the sun rise from his back porch while making eggs and bacon on his hamburger grill. He and smudge stand in awe of the mighty sun pushing itself through the horizon, as they watch with 3-D glasses. They then eat their eggs and bacon while balancing on skateboards near the porch table.

When the back porch and kitchen are cleaned from the explosion of breakfast, Mr. Dooliedopper skips to his garage and gets his bike that is detailed with green, sparkly scales like a fish. He pedals barefoot around town for the rest of the morning, still in his pajamas. Smudge rides along in a straw basket attached to the handlebars. They look for coins in the street and lost hats from broken suitcases and the back of trucks. After collecting all they can, they go to their neighbor's house and give the coins and hats to Mrs. Jean's seven, red-headed children.

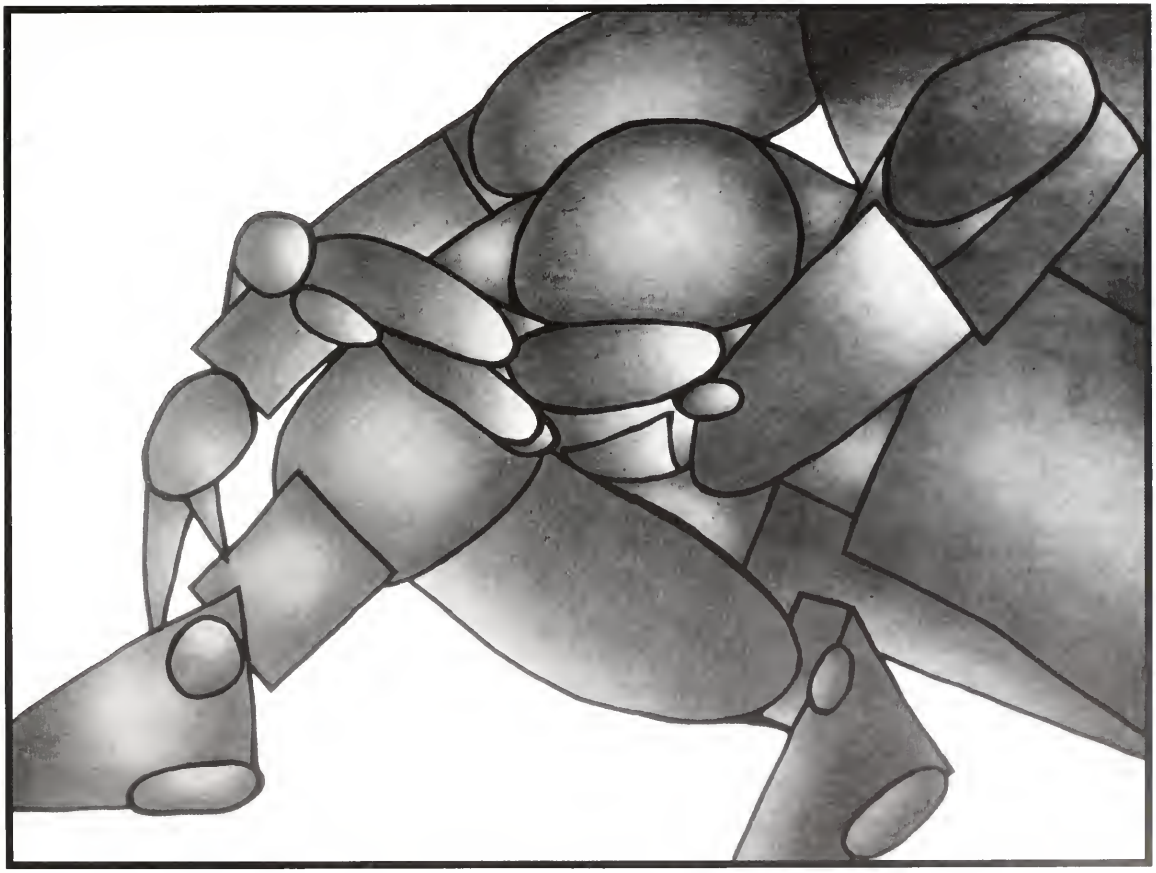
In the afternoon, when the bike is put away, Mr. Dooliedopper makes a peanut-butter, mayonnaise, and banana sandwich with a side of grape jelly mixed in cottage cheese for lunch. He and Smudge lie in a purple and red tie-dyed hammock in the back yard watching people play golf in the park behind them. Mr. Dooliedopper eats his sandwich and then shares the cottage cheese and jelly with Smudge. When finished, they fall asleep in the

shade of the trees that are gripping the ends of the hammock.

Hours later, Mr. Dooliedopper wakes up from the grumbling in his stomach. He and Smudge go inside the house and Mr. Dooliedopper calls his friends and invites them to his house for a popcorn and fondue dinner. When his friends arrive, he sings a separate greeting to each of them, and then all the friends gather in the front yard to give a joyful prayer for the food that Mr. Dooliedopper made. They eat and play badmitton while Mr. Dooliedopper watches them enjoy the night. When the street lamps in the front of the house go off, all his friends depart.

Mr. Dooliedopper says good-bye, and goes inside to sit on his elephant-shaped couch. Smudge curls under the couch and Mr. Dooliedopper lights up a pipe and begins to read a book out loud about hobbits, wizards, and elves. He finishes his pipe and closes the book. "Goodnight, Smudgy-boy," he whispers, and then walks upstairs barefoot, still in his rainbow pajamas. Entering his bedroom, he waves goodnight to his shadowy antiques, rubs his bald head, and then yawns under his dark, bushy moustache. Mr. C. Donnie Dooliedopper collapses onto his bed, and begins to dream.

Nicole Bertolasi



Nate Feller

Oak Tree

Back in the early 80's
there was an oak tree,
with outstretched branches and pretty green leaves.
My friends and me played around that tree,
almost every day,
but over time we all went our separate ways.
None of us made it to the NBA.
Some had dreams of college degrees,
most ending up with only GEDs.
Some turned Muslims, others turned thieves.
I look up at the tree and down falls a leaf.
A possible prom queen,
is now a dope fiend.
To play college ball once was his goal,
but to the almighty dollar he sold his soul
25 years no chance of parole.
Positive,
no one from here's gonna be.
I see another leaf fall off the tree.
It's right in yo face but you don't see!
Eyes wide open yet blind as can be.
Gang members became the role models,
baggy jeans, beepers, and forty-ounce beer bottles.
Nobody ended up like they thought they would.
They just did what at the time looked good.
Now when I gaze up at that tree made of wood,
there's something I noticed about that tree.
The bark's all rotten and it's just one leaf,
now the day I thought I would never live to see
is just a memory.
None of my friends remember me.
I guess I'm like the leaf on the tree.

— Kiestan Taylor

World's Dumbest Genius

Sometimes I look in the mirror
And I don't like what I see
A hypocrite starin' back at me
Am I just a product of this corrupt society
Or maybe the offspring of hypocrisy
How can I go to church
And listen to men preach
When all my relatives get high all week
I want to be an honest man but I was taught to cheat
By all my father figures
I wish I could turn these niggas
Back into black men
But they all get their brains in a sleeper
Now I know how God feels
Cause nobody believes in me either
Born in my mouth without a silver spoon
Raised on fast food and violent cartoons
So don't threaten me with hell cause I'm already there
Confined to a place where don't nobody care
About nothing but makin' more money
Ain't no milk and honey, just sugar coated lies
And people wonder why the homicide rate's high
My life in itself is a virtual torture chamber
The little brother of a gang banger
The son of a complete stranger
Mama always said there'd be days like this
And I'm pissed cause everything stays like this
So in this world I search for leverage
And take away the pain with the alcoholic beverage
But when I sober up my problems still exist
So in this world I feel like a fish
Out of water
Watching people like me get slaughtered
But most put the gun up to they own head
Not physically just mentally dead
But this mentality has been spoonfed
Thru broken English
So label me the world's dumbest genius

-bogs&scotch-

hungry for sunday in my underwear
drinking cranberries in a
leather
chair
lying back to the
radio
drinking noise & light &
hair.

-smell the people-

before
the formalities
he
smelled
her boof.
the ardent aromas seeped from her holes
& converted the surroundings
to warriors, & possessed fighters.
these lusty fumes attacked his un-armed
olfactory functions, and left him
howling in emphatic retreat.
his nostrils danced to the beat & his gut
screamed for release
into this air
now solid
with
smell.

Betzi Moore

Nate Feller

Poem in a Box

Who drew these lines?
Whose eyes I feel?
How did it start?
Where does it end?
What will I feel like when it's over?

Evan Murphy

Teacher's Fish Story

Kids on the cusp crowd bankside into
my lungs while I wet and whisper advice:
size of hook, strength of line, how far out,
cast, tangle, recover.

Peddling pebbles and limits.

They open downstream hatcheries and
mongeries, open smoke shops with
polished rock and roller blade kiosks,
tie and fly and still . . .

When I dock the boat and gather over
grog, mount my scaly trophies or my
fire-red love, oh the ones that got away!
The ones that got away!

— Jeffrey Michels

ODE TO MY BED

We've had some good times, you and me
We were simply
Meant to be
You are my bed
You are where I sleep

I sit on you
I lay on you
I crawl onto you
I get into you
I love you

I don't know if it's how
I have just enough space
And take delight in the fact, that
You could still comfortably support me
Were I to grow
A few more inches

You are there for me when I am sleepy

I like your blankets I toss to and fro
The cool at first dark sheets I feel against my feet
As I kick them down
When I, under the covers
Stretch my body out

You are where I have planted myself
Face down
And sobbed

You are there for me

You are my bed and I love you

Under you is where I hide
My slingshot and dirty mags
And all the things I shouldn't have

And occasionally there's an upturning
Of something from under you
Where a week or so before I looked
Everywhere else in a mad frantic rush
But could not find

And have a sense of humor

Under you was where when I was younger

Mary Bonavia

The mess went
When my room became so suddenly mysteriously clean

Your edge is the most heavenly to my behind
I don't move you as much as I used to

You are where I've slept on
Nights of deep sleep
Nights of tossing and turning sleep
And once, more recently
Nights of the room is moving because I've drank too
much weird liquor sleep

Day naps

You are where I've knelt to pray

There's no other quite like you
You are what I like most about my room

You are from where I observe the stars
The neon glowing stick up stars on my ceiling

You are
And always will be forever
My bed

And I love you

— Joseph C. Verstynen

E.T.A.

by Ryan Saunders

Rudders and elevators and ailerons – oh my! The Pilot is pissed. He won't look at me. The Stewardess won't look at me. We cruise at an altitude of 30,000 feet... The adrenaline courses through my veins with such fury, sending me higher. ...at a speed of 240 knots. However fast that is. Not as fast as my beating heart. Flight 279 would place 2nd place in a 100 yard dash against my mind which I'm sure is running faster than 240 knots. However fast that is. Will Burger King hire me? Will K-Mart hire me? She smiled at me when I first boarded. She asked me if I wanted a drink. I did. Oh how I would enjoy a lobotomy though.

"Is there a doctor on the plane?"

Oh Christ! Will Kentucky Fried Chicken hire me? Did I leave the oven on? Is the safety on? Captain O'Mally wonders the same thing as he looks at my .45 magnum out the corner of his eye. His blue eye. His left blue eye. More like bluish-gray. I'm sweating profusely. I'm cruising at 240 knots, at an altitude of 30,000 feet. And I'm sweating. Profusely. Will the Captain still Screw the Stewardess tonight? Could I have screwed the stewardess before I pointed my .45 at her? I bought it on a pawnshop on 9th Street. Could the guy at the pawnshop have screwed the stewardess? He was built. And tan. If I were built and tan, would I be pointing a .45 at Captain O'Mally? Would I even have a .45? I can still get a job at McDonald's after all this I decide, before the dials and gauges start making me dizzy.

"What do you hope to accomplish by this, son?"

I tell Captain O'Mally to just drive. And I cock the hammer so he knows I'm not bullshitting. Captain O'Mally hasn't anything to say to that. The Stewardess comes into the cockpit. She starts telling me about Mr. Saladino's heart condition and that Mrs. Mueller is pregnant. But I don't care. And why would she, as sweet and pure and beautiful and perfect as she happens to be, think that I'd care? And why does every hijacker get a pregnant women on his plane? Tell me this. Lord, I can't wait to work at Mc'D's. I want another drink. I want her phone number. And her undying unconditional love. I want to learn needle-point. I want to do things different next time. I want to know our estimated time of arrival.

"TWA Flight 279, from LaGuardia to Heathrow, ETA in 20 minutes."

Splendid! I want to see Big Ben.

Robbery at 65,000 BPS

So much caffeine in my veins
I feel the modem connect
My daily grind
Website goldmine
I copyright some XXX
Images of steaming hot sex
Amateur hardcore action
Barley legal - same ol' same ol'
Initate phase two
Listen up business man
This cyber porn was made possible
By assholes like you.
Forever sealing your fate
With this super fast baud rate.
Your mainframe is mine
Cracked your code and picked your lock
hacked my into your iMAC
from the back
I download your uplink
Then reboot your ass down the
corporate ladder
Accounts online are easy fodder.
Your skeletons creak from the closet
Glowing on my VGA...
And by mid-day
i've acquired all your numbers:
Social security, credit cards,
I can page you from your own cell
Tomorrow I'll find out what's in your
safety deposit box
Or just rewrite your will
I hide your stocks behind silicon blocks
And send your bonds on an
e nd l e s s journey
down the information
super
highway
robbery!
With a click of my mouse
I mortage your house
Unmarry you from your spouse
My pentium monster devours your
whole life.
Until...
"Disk is Full"
Begin the race
FEDS can trace me through the
hardwire
cleanse the hard drive
print the hardcopy
that'll have Daddy Warbucks singin'
"It's a hard knock life."
While little orphan Annie hooks up
the webcam over her bed.
Millions log on
Then get off
To the steaming hot sex
Amateur hardcore action
Of the barely legal

Red Head.

SYANRAUNDERS

i will make a castle of
dead alewives.
they wash up in pods
pods of
small
slender
silver
they slipped up and
i will make their death into a
castle

a castle with a million eyes.

5

weave tight.
break from shadow to run
one follow one follow three and
i saw them with ears fine as
2 cupped hands,
quivering.

haiku

love-you complete me.
you are yin, i yang. we kiss
and it is give, give.

jessica moore

mother snake

2 eyes
aimed.
shot.

he loved you
dead.
took off your skin
split your belly.

found
39 small, slender, pink
unborn
glistening.

3

at least you were not lonely
in that creek.
had your 2 littermates.
a gray, a black,
you-
soft orange

pale and cold
stiff bodies

we buried you three
with leaves,
tall grasses
to
hide you from the flies
so you could
rest.

Contributors

Lori Agostini is transferring from RVC to Rockford College to study Art History and Photography. She earned her AA in three years while working full-time.

Melissa Alexander works at RVC as a Communications Specialist. She has published work as a free-lance writer and enjoys writing poetry the most. Melissa was awarded this issue's Reader's Prize for Literary Achievement.

Nicole Bertolasi, now in her second year at RVC, is majoring in graphic design.

Mary Bonavia is a student at RVC.

Mario Caputo has been stranded at RVC for the past four years (though he vehemently denies it has been that long). He writes music and poems, and sings to trout.

Judith Cordary teaches under the pseudonym Judy Straffin in the RVC Division of Composition and Literature. She is a former editor of *Voices* and a published poet.

Mark Dal Pra attends RVC and likes "rollerskates and high school dances."

Dana Drozd-Gardner is transferring from RVC to Millikan to study art education. She plays in clay and sings. Her goal is to be a pro snowboarder, or at least meet one.

Nathan Feller plans to transfer from RVC to NIU. Nathan won a Spin City Prize for Artistic Achievement for his drawings included in this issue.

Ximena Giraldo plans to transfer from RVC to Columbia to study interior design.

Jen Hartzog, photographer, is a student at RVC. Jen says she loves "capturing the stark realism that black and white reveals."

Katie Klaas is a high school senior taking classes at RVC for early college credit. She drew the hands included in this issue by the banks of the Kishwaulkee River.

Nathan P. McDonald is a student at RVC. He received the coveted *Voices* Grand Prize ($100) for his contribution to this issue.

Jeffrey Michels teaches the course on Small Magazine Production at RVC. (What a great course! Why don't you enroll?) Any errors in this issue are his fault. A San Francisco native, this is his first winter in Illinois.

Betzi Moore, a student at RVC, is president of the RVC Arts and Literary Society. She is the exception to every rule. She loves fibers and colors.

Jessica Moore plans to leave RVC for Northern in the Fall. Jessica draws, paints, beads, sews patches and has poor eyesight. She loves goldfish very much.

Evan Murphy is a student at RVC. His paintings included in this issue won him a Spin City Prize for Artistic Achievement.

Carole Rittenhouse, takes classes at RVC and has studied art all her life. She feels happiest and most relaxed while painting. Her daughter, Cherri, teaches art at RVC.

Ryan Saunders, an RVC student, doesn't know what to do with his life, but is currently practicing architecture and writing free-lance for the British magazine, *Loaded!*

Colin Smith is transferring from RVC to Columbia University. He likes "dirty jokes, carrots 'cause they're crunchy and the color red."

Kiestan Taylor, a sophomore at RVC, is majoring in Elementary Education. He is also Vice President of the Black Student Alliance. A published poet, Kiestan won the Rockford Public Library's Poetry Slam in April of 1999.

Paul Van Altena is a student at RVC planning to transfer to Columbia to study art.

Joseph C. Verstynen plans to transfer from RVC to the University of Iowa.

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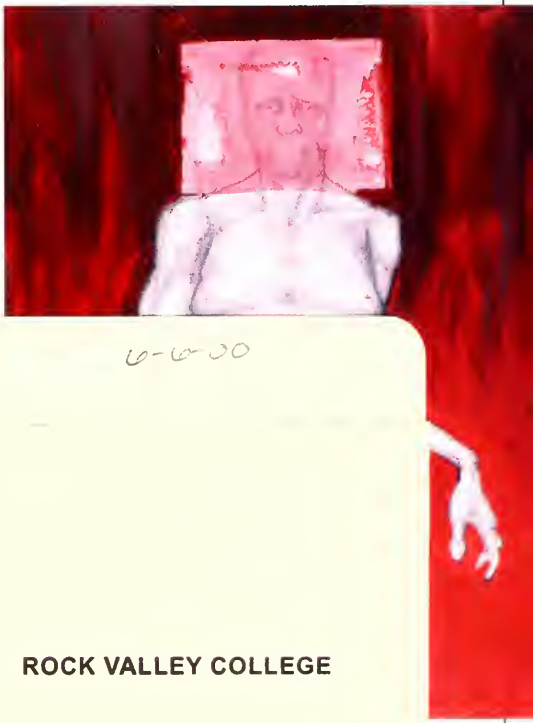

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